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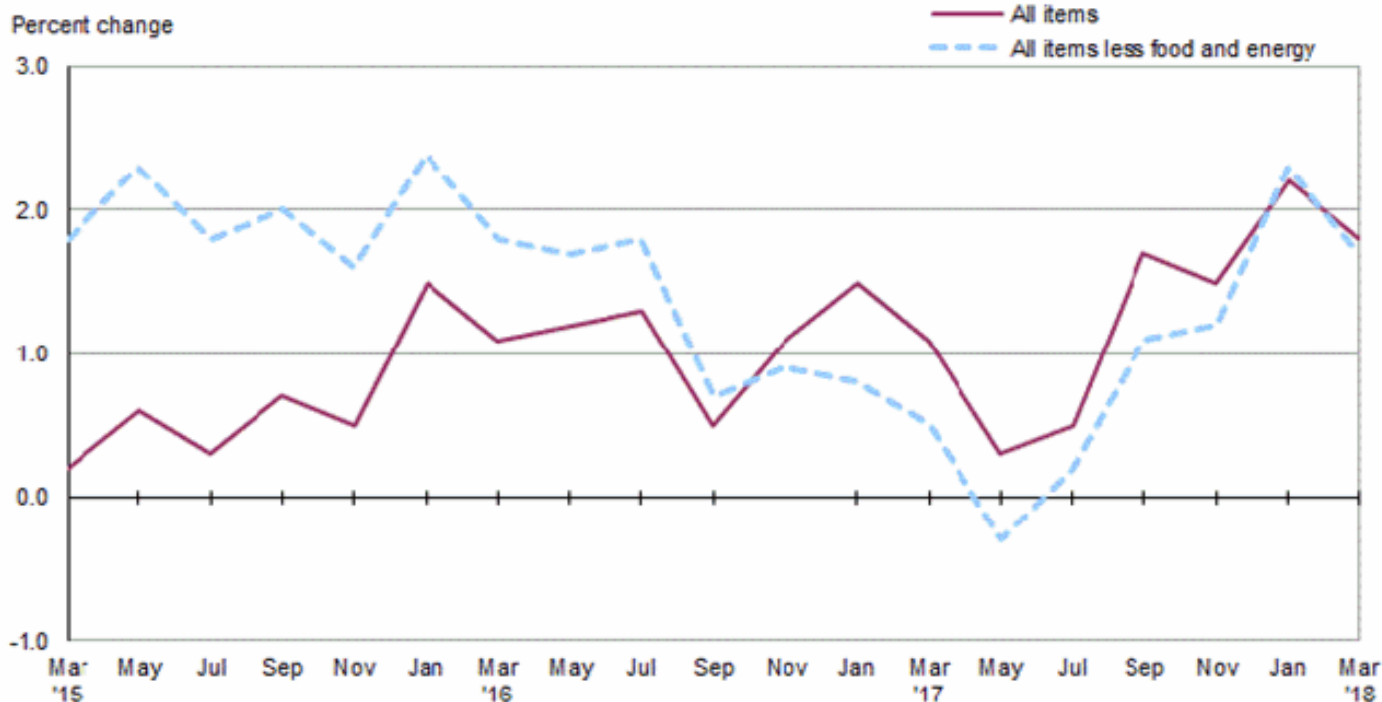
Consumer Price Index, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria – March 2018

Area prices down 0.1 percent since January; up 1.8 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria inched down 0.1 percent from January to March, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the recent decrease was due largely to a 0.9-percent decline in the energy index. The food index also decreased, down 0.1 percent since January, while the all items less food and energy index was unchanged. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 1.8 percent, mainly reflecting a 1.7-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since March 2017, the food index and energy index also increased, up 1.6 and 3.4 percent, respectively. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, March 2015–March 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

The food index inched down 0.1 percent over the last two months. Prices for food away from home declined 0.3 percent, while prices for food at home were 0.1 percent higher. Within the food at home component, prices rose since January for various items including chicken and lettuce.

Food prices increased 1.6 percent over the year. Prices were higher for both the food away from home and food at home components, up 2.8 and 0.5 percent, respectively, since last March.

Energy

Since January, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, declined 0.9 percent, due to lower prices for utility (piped) gas service and electricity, down 4.0 and 1.1 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, gasoline prices were unchanged over the last two months.

Energy prices rose 3.4 percent over the year. The advance due almost entirely to a 9.5-percent increase in gasoline prices. Prices for electricity edged up 0.3 percent over the year, while prices utility (piped) gas service declined 8.7 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy was unchanged since January. Prices were lower in several categories including recreation (-3.7 percent), education and communication (-1.7 percent), and apparel (-1.4 percent); prices rose for several others including shelter (0.3 percent) and medical care (0.9 percent).

Since March 2017, the index for all items less food and energy rose 1.7 percent. The advance was led by higher prices for shelter (1.9 percent); the indexes for apparel (5.5 percent) and recreation (3.7 percent) were among the other indexes that had increases. Meanwhile, prices for education and communication declined 1.2 percent over the year.

Table A. Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
January.....	0.2	1.7	-1.1	-0.2	-0.2	1.5	0.2	1.5	0.9	2.2
March	0.8	1.7	1.2	0.2	0.8	1.1	0.4	1.1	-0.1	1.8
May.....	0.3	2.0	0.7	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.3		
July	0.0	1.7	-0.3	0.3	-0.2	1.3	0.0	0.5		
September.....	0.1	1.1	0.6	0.7	-0.3	0.5	0.9	1.7		
November.....	-0.3	1.1	-0.4	0.5	0.2	1.1	0.0	1.5		

The Consumer Price Index for May 2018 is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, June 12, 2018, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Washington-Arlington-Alexandria is published bi-monthly. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 94 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 28 percent of the total population.

The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.










































The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **Note: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MA-WV, Core Based Statistical Area** includes the District of Columbia; the counties of Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the county of Jefferson in West Virginia.















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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2018	Feb. 2018	Mar. 2018	Mar. 2017	Jan. 2018	Feb. 2018
All items.....		260.219		260.026	1.8	-0.1	
Food and beverages		247.174		247.101	1.6	0.0	
Food		251.896		251.712	1.6	-0.1	
Food at home		240.404	239.713	240.601	0.5	0.1	0.4
Cereals and bakery products		316.057		316.301		0.1	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		255.860		262.852		2.7	
Dairy and related products		238.316		238.366		0.0	
Fruits and vegetables		268.441		261.109		-2.7	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		203.682		206.111		1.2	
Other food at home		196.129		195.090		-0.5	
Food away from home.....		267.370		266.695	2.8	-0.3	
Alcoholic beverages		201.600		202.640	0.8	0.5	
Housing		270.548		270.687	1.6	0.1	
Shelter		326.513	326.815	327.426	1.9	0.3	0.2
Rent of primary residence(2).....		357.181	357.092	356.530	2.8	-0.2	-0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)(3)		333.814	333.776	333.317	1.7	-0.1	-0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)(3)		333.814	333.776	333.317	1.7	-0.1	-0.1
Fuels and utilities.....		230.398		227.149	-1.2	-1.4	
Household energy		181.471	184.213	178.277	-1.7	-1.8	-3.2
Energy services(2)		185.896	188.678	182.453	-1.9	-1.9	-3.3
Electricity(2).....		209.977	210.918	207.591	0.3	-1.1	-1.6
Utility (piped) gas service(2)		131.044	137.052	125.857	-8.7	-4.0	-8.2
Household furnishings and operations.....		104.145		103.538	2.1	-0.6	
Apparel.....		164.464		162.120	5.5	-1.4	
Transportation		212.173		215.146	2.2	1.4	
Private transportation		211.267		212.255	1.9	0.5	
New and used motor vehicles(4).....		92.400		93.649		1.4	
New vehicles(1).....		198.215		196.977		-0.6	
Used cars and trucks(1)		290.881		299.073		2.8	
Motor fuel		237.532	238.858	237.519	9.5	0.0	-0.6
Gasoline (all types).....		234.870	236.164	234.822	9.5	0.0	-0.6
Gasoline, unleaded regular(5).....		229.443	230.815	229.090	9.6	-0.2	-0.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(5)(6).....		233.174	231.803	234.600	9.3	0.6	1.2
Gasoline, unleaded premium(5).....		248.424	249.467	251.018	8.5	1.0	0.6
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		866.413		858.198		-0.9	
Medical care		449.867		453.974	2.1	0.9	
Recreation(4).....		119.283		114.923	3.7	-3.7	
Education and communication(4).....		155.486		152.905	-1.2	-1.7	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1).....		1,376.457		1,382.840		0.5	
Other goods and services		404.909		404.319	1.1	-0.1	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		179.373		179.236	1.4	-0.1	

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2018	Feb. 2018	Mar. 2018	Mar. 2017	Jan. 2018	Feb. 2018
Commodities less food and beverages		144.653		144.497	1.4	-0.1	
Nondurables less food and beverages...		192.921		192.331	4.6	-0.3	
Durables		100.445		100.599	-1.9	0.2	
Services		333.440		333.198	1.9	-0.1	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		233.520		232.901	1.8	-0.3	
All items less medical care		251.266		250.862	1.8	-0.2	
Commodities less food		147.303		147.189	1.4	-0.1	
Nondurables		219.237		218.898	2.9	-0.2	
Nondurables less food		193.500		193.039	4.3	-0.2	
Services less rent of shelter(3)		352.585		350.863	1.9	-0.5	
Services less medical care services		322.420		321.922	1.9	-0.2	
Energy		209.916	212.060	208.115	3.4	-0.9	-1.9
All items less energy		267.400		267.334	1.7	0.0	
All items less food and energy		271.447		271.402	1.7	0.0	

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on a November 1977=100 base.

(2) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(3) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.

(4) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(5) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(6) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.